



# Review of Public Records Training, Consultation, and Grant Programs

**Legislative Auditor Conclusion:** The Attorney General's Office and State Archives have served at least 420 local governments through their public records programs. Participants report they are satisfied, but the programs have yet to establish a plan to evaluate long-term impacts.

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## In 2017, ESHB 1594:

Established 3 programs to assist local governments with public records.

Programs were to expire in 2020.

Directed a JLARC evaluation of the programs.

HB 1667 (2019) removed the 2020 expiration date.





# Public Records Act

Requires state agencies and local governments to make their public records available to the public.

## **A public record is:**

Any written, recorded, electronic, or illustrated document:

- Prepared, owned, used, or retained by a state or local agency.
- Related to the conduct or performance of any governmental activity or function. (RCW 42.56.010(3))

# AGO and Archives provide programs to assist local governments with public records.

## Attorney General

### Consultation

Mitigating costs and liability of compliance with the Public Records Act.

## State Archives

### Training & consultation

Advice, guidance, and support for records management and retention.

### Local records grant

Funding to improve records organization, digitization, and technology tools.



# JLARC report highlights

Number and types of consultations, trainings, and grants.

Number of local governments served by the three programs.

Program effectiveness to improve public records practices.

## Attorney General's Office

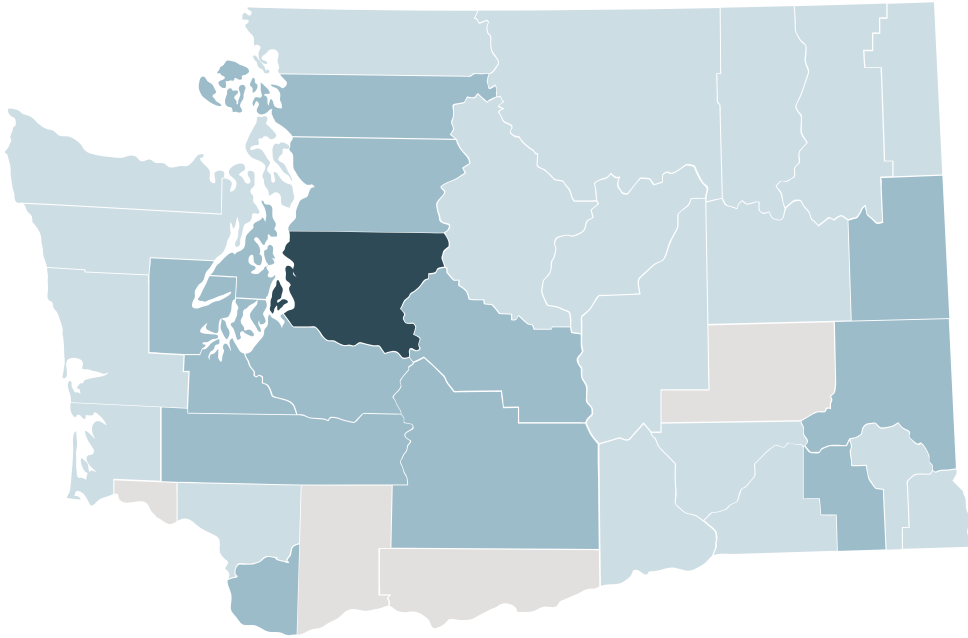
**Consultation program** assists with developing best practices and complying with the Public Records Act.

Common topics:

- Public records policy
- Exemptions to disclosure
- Managing and responding to records requests
- Software tools for redaction

Consultations were provided via phone, email, or in-person.

## AGO EMAIL, PHONE & ON-SITE CONSULTATIONS



## FISCAL YEARS 2018-2019

52 in-person consults to 48 local governments.

227 email and phone consults to 141 local governments.

40 trainings with over 1,900 attendees.

## State Archives

Provides **trainings and consultations** on records management and retention.

### Common topics:

- Digital records management
- Organizing files
- Retention schedules

### Trainings:

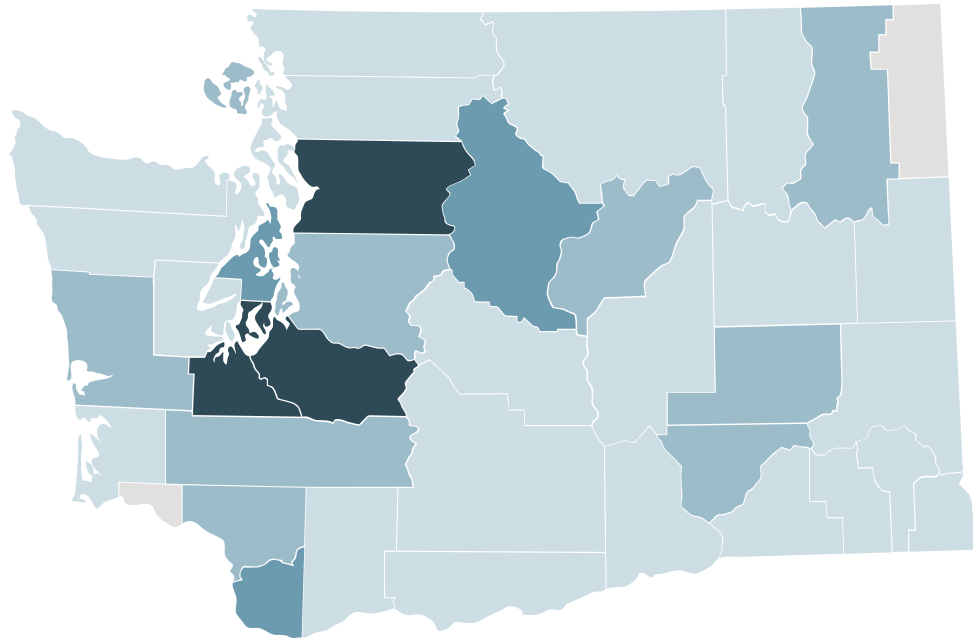
- Structured educational events
- In-person & webinar classes
- Individualized sessions

### Consultations:

- One-on-one advice sessions between Archives and local governments



# ARCHIVES IN-PERSON TRAINING AND CONSULTATION



## FISCAL YEARS 2018-2019

297 in-person consults to 225 local governments.

4,933 email and phone consults to state and local governments.

137 trainings with 4,873 participants from state and local governments.

## State Archives

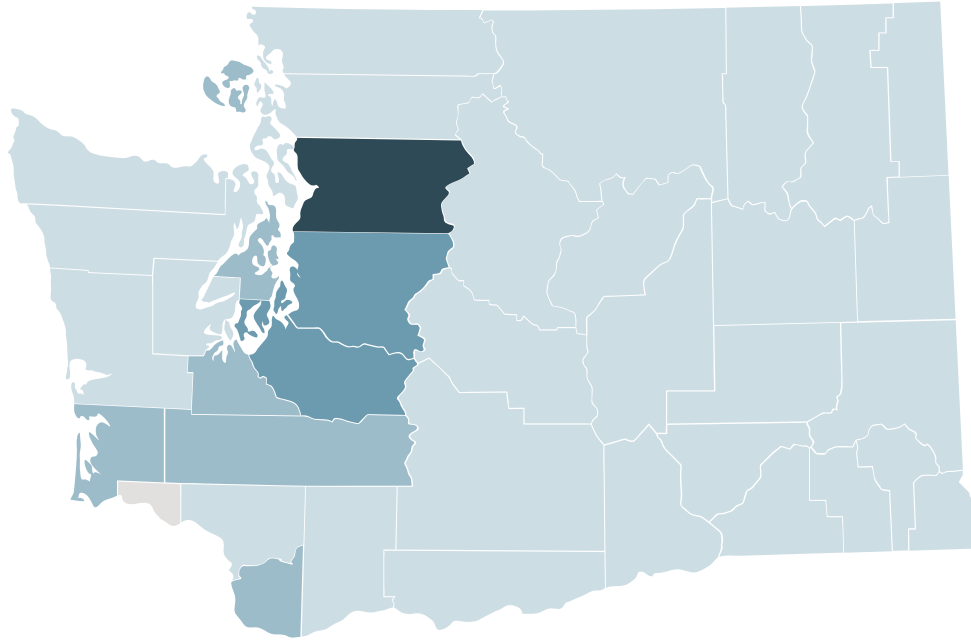
Provides funding to local governments through a **competitive grant** for records management and technology.

**3 types of grants:** organize the file room, digital imaging, technology tools.



# FISCAL YEARS 2018-2019

## LOCAL RECORDS GRANTS

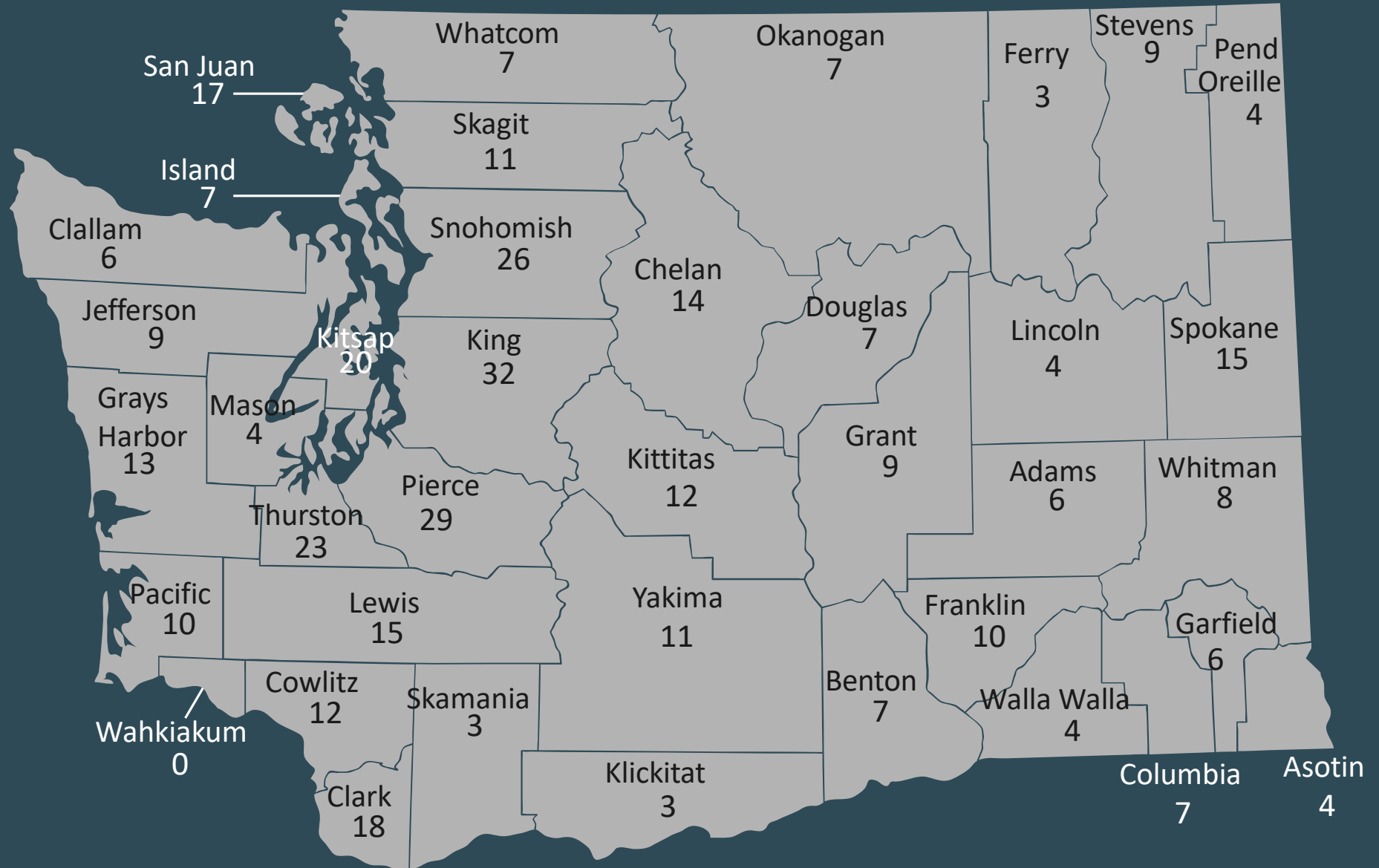


160 local government grant recipients.

\$2.4M awarded in the 2017-19 biennium.

Grant awards range from \$375 to \$50,000.

**420 local  
governments  
received  
services from  
one or more  
programs**



y	Agency Type	Agency Name	AGO Consultation	State Archives Consultation & Training	Grant Recipi
s	City/town	Othello		✓	✓
		Ritzville		✓	✓
	County	Adams County		✓	
		Adams County Public Works		✓	✓
	School district/ESD	Othello School District		✓	
	Special district	East Columbia Basin Irrigation District		✓	
i	City/town	Clarkston	✓	✓	✓
	County	Asotin County		✓	✓
	School district/ESD	Clarkston School District		✓	
	Special district	Port of Clarkston		✓	✓
n	City/town	Benton City		✓	✓
		Kennewick	✓		
		Prosser			✓
	School district/ESD	Richland School District	✓		
	Special district	Benton County PUD #1	✓		✓
		Benton-Franklin Health District		✓	
		Franklin County Noxious Weed Control Board	✓		
		West Benton Fire Rescue		✓	✓
1	City/town	Cashmere	✓	✓	✓
		Chelan		✓	
		Entiat		✓	✓
		Wenatchee Police		✓	

Report  
includes  
interactive  
appendix



## Local governments reporting satisfaction

76%

Reported that programs met  
their needs

693 local government  
program participants  
responded to JLARC's  
survey

## Local governments reporting satisfaction

66%

Reported that they  
made changes

693 local government  
program participants  
responded to JLARC's  
survey

AGO and Archives had not yet developed plans for evaluating long-term program impacts.

## Strategic planning can help the AGO and Archives:

- Target service delivery.

- Clarify priorities for awarding grants.

- Identify opportunities for collaboration.

# Legislative Auditor's Recommendation

The Attorney General's Office and State Archives should each produce strategic plans to focus their future efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of the public records training, consultation, and grants programs on response times, costs, and liability.

**Due: December 2020**



## Next Steps

First formal recommendation follow up: 2021

## Full Report

[leg.wa.gov/jlarc/AuditAndStudyReports](https://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/AuditAndStudyReports)





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